DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 055 318 EA 003 650

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TITLE Accountability and Management.
PUB DATE Jul 71
NOTE 15p.; Speech given before Southern Association of College and Schools annual conference. (65th, Roanoke, Virginia, July 14-16, 1971)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Accountability; Management; *Parent Attitudes; Performance Contracts; Program Evaluation; *Program Planning; School Community Relationship; *School Taxes; Speeches; Systems Approach

ABSTRACT

This speech describes accountability as the matching of intent to results and explains the utility of planning, programing, budgeting systems in implementing an accountability policy in school systems. (JF)

ED055318

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ACCOUNTABILITY AND MANAGEMENT

REMARKS OF:

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TO:

SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION OF
COLLEGE AND SCHOOLS
6TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON
ELEMENTARY EDUCATION
JULY 14-16, 1971
HOTEL ROANOKE
ROANOKE, VIRGINIA

EA 003 650

(Greetings and thanks for the opportunity to meet and discuss.)

People are deeply concerned these days about the problems of our schools.

One can argue about which problem heads the list--student unrest, teacher militancy, drug abuse or lack of discipline, to name a few. But there is no argument about the importance of money as a problem. People everywhere are worried about rising costs and an overburdened property tax. The growing and widespread taxpayer resistance to voting increased funds, even when it means severe cut-backs in school services or closing them down, is proof enough of trouble.

The optimism about the value of education is still there but serious doubts have sprung up about schools being able to deliver on promises.

It is no longer possible to avoid the conclusion our President stated in the very first sentence of his March 3rd, 1970 Education message: "American education is in need of reform." And reformed it will be.

Not one of you in this room holds doubts about this statement. The question is, "Who will do the reforming?" Will we, as professional educators sit quietly while societal pressures of all kinds push and pull public education into a new shape and then leave the structure for us to administer?

Or will we, as professionals, take a directive part in this reshaping so that we can live with the new organization?

I see few suggestions coming from the professional educators at this time.

One idea for reshaping has evolved. It goes under the name of Accountability at the present time. Accountability is a matching of intent to results; a comparison of what was supposed to happen with what actually happened.

People have good cause for their economic concerns about education--especially when costs are related to benefits. It is precisely the comparison of rising costs with provable benefits that has triggered the call for accountability in education.

The amounts of public money budgeted nationally during the past few years certainly show that the public has not been stingy with dollar inputs to education. But what of the products? What of the outputs of the educational system during that period? What has the American public received in extra student accomplishment, for this money?

Surprisingly, we do not really know.

As a nation, we do know a lot about some aspects of our educational system. We know how many teachers there are, what degrees they have, how old they are, and even how tall they are. We have reliable statistics on school buildings and how old and how tall they are. We can pin down per-capita expenditures in and of the more than 17,000 school systems in the country. We even know how many language laboratories are in operation.

We do not know, however, specifically, what is produced by all these teachers, buildings, laboratories, and dollars. We don't know what the students are learning. We cannot describe how close our schools come to accomplishing what they aim to accomplish nor identify, in any precise way, the strengths and weaknesses of the system. We have no measure of progress or the lack of it over time. In the critical field of reading, for example, we do not know what it costs on the average to increase a youngster's reading achievement one year.

Accountability is that policy declaration which has the potential of sparking the reform needed in both administration and instruction so we can provide answers

to these and so many other questions our publics are currently asking about our opeations.

Accountability heralds a new age for education.

According to Webster's Dictionary, accountability is "the condition of being accountable, liable or responsible." When the word is used by schcol people it suggests the holding of the adults who are involved in the education of children responsible for what they do in terms of a relationship between objectives promised, resources applied and outcomes realized. It is a matching of intent to results; a comparison of what was supposed to happen with what did happen.

The concept conveys the meaning that professional educators should be held answerable for children's learning. It suggests that if this can be done, favorable changes will be seen in academic achievement, and in pupil attitudes. We will have, in general, better educational results.

Accountability refers to the process of expecting each member of an organization to answer to someone. It presupposes that each member of an organization has joined that organization to further its purposes as well as his or her own purposes.

Making people accountable for their organizational behavior has the potential to ensure that the organization will attain its goals.

To quote my colleague, Leon Lessinger, who has been dubbed "the Father of Accountability"; "accountability is the product of a process. At its most basic level, it means that an agent, public or private, entering into a contractual agreement to perform a service, will be held answerable for performing according to agreed upon terms, within an established period of time, and with a stipulated use of resources and performance standard. This definition of accountability requires that the parties to the contract keep clear and complete records and that this

information be available for outside review. It also suggests penalties and rewards; accountability without regress or inventive is mere rhetoric."

THE PRESS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

A rapidly growing number of influential people in our nation are becoming convinced that it is possible to hold the schools accountable for the results of their activities as they hold other important agencies.

In his EDUCATION MESSAGE OF MARCH 3rd, 1970, President Nixon stated, "from these considerations we derive another new concept: accountability. School administrators and school teachers alike are responsible for their performance, and it is in their interest as well as in the interests of their pupils that they be held accountable."

It is interesting to note some of the results of a 1970 poll conducted by Gallop International for the CFK Ltd., a Denver-based foundation regarding accountability. In answer to the question, "Would you favor or oppose a system that would hold teachers and administrators more accountable for the progress of students?" 68% of the public school parents and 71% of the parochial school parents would be in favor.

Also, 66% of those polled who had no children in school, and 65% of high school juniors and seniors would be in favor of such a policy.

We are all aware that in these years of increasing refusal by the taxpayer to meet the rising educational costs, questions such as, "What did you do with that other money?" are becoming more and more prevalent. We cannot supply satisfying answers.

We are all aware - and in some instances frightfully aware - that the major press for accountability is coming from the taxpayer through his local board of school directors, through his state board of directors, and through his legislators.

I would like to quote Russell Peterson, Governor of the State of Delaware and recently elected chairman of the Education Commission of the States. One year ago, in the July, 1970 meeting of the Commission held in Denver, Governor Peterson said:

"In my recent "Future of the State" message, I set out specific output goals for various state agencies over the next one to ten years. Some examples were:

*Reducing the amount of violent crime 25% by 1976.

*Getting 1000 welfare recipients off the rolls and into jobs within two years.

*Having Delaware, within five years, lead the nation with the lowest number of deaths and injuries per automobile passenger mile.

As Governor, I am accountable for achievement of these specific goals.

I winced a little in reviewing my objectives for education from the same speech. All the goals are inputs, such as completing the institution of state-supported kindergartens; establishing community schools; completing the upgrading of occupational-vocational education; and establishing prekindergarten programs by 1976. Why couldn't I list as goals for education:

*Reducing the high school dropouts by 50%, or

*Insuring that every child who left the schools could read and comprehend political and economic news, so that he could function effectively as a literate voter in our democracy?

In other words, educators traditionally think in terms of inputs- new programs, more dollars for educational materials, higher teacher salaries, and the like. We have files (and wastebaskets) full of statistics about education-- how many schools, how many teachers, how many strikes and campus rebellions. Statistical facts and intuitive opinions are easy to come by. But we don't seem to know what the kids are learning, what they actually know, and what they can do as a result of going to school.

The need for our consideration of professional response to this press is great. Let me turn now to some strategies that educators could implement. And I feel very strongly that educators should take a hand in this basic re-shaping of public education.

Firstly, instead of being swept along by public opinion and by pressure groups, teachers and administrators must assist the local communities, the state authorities, and the Federal government, in a determination of WHAT THE SCHOOLS CAN DO. And what parts of a youngster's education can best be handled by other educational institutions.

Secondly, we must focus our attention on results. At its heart, the only acceptable definition.of effective teaching centers on how well the students learn. It would make much more sense if we included, along with the "per-pupil cost," a "learning-unit cost." This would focus attention on the level of learning and the accomplishments of children along with the analysis of costs of maintaining them in school.

Thirdly, professional educators must face many issues which we have been avoiding for years, such as the pupil time problem. Pupil time is one of the most precious inputs to the educational system. Over the years we have allowed more and more of this precious input to be taken away from us and used for attem pting to teach topics which might be better taught by other societal institutions.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have spread ourselves too thin!

As professionals, we must move toward helping our constituents to see this problem. Specifically, what is it reasonable for the student to learn or achieve in the four hour day, 180 day school year which is typical in our land?

As professionals we must consider how to get more pupil time? Should we have compulsory attendance? Do all children need 12 years to grasp what public education

has to offer? Or could some grasp it in 9? or 14?

Other issues which we have studiously avoided must be seriously confronted. I see as being among the more important of these the questions:

a. what are the unique contributions of the school system to broader societal educational system? And what are its limitations?

b. for what are school personnel responsible and to whom are they accountable?

c. what arrangements can be made in the community to enable schools to carry burdens for which they lack capabilities?

In principle the American educational commitment has been that every child should have access to an adequate education. This is the familiar but still unattained principle of equal educational opportunity.

This commitment has been translated into dollar allocations for the people and the "things" of education.

Accountability demands a revised commitment - that every child shall learn. Such a revision demands a "can do" spirit. In response to accountability a zero-failure program must be implemented. Individualized instruction - that which we have been talking about for two decades - will allow each student continuous progress towards attainment of a "full" education (reading, writing, computation, responsibility, morals, career education).

Letter from a mother -

Eric may not be so bright as some others, but he can be a failure without going to school. I wouldn't pay a dime for a washing machine that wouldn't work, and I'm tired of paying for schools that make a failure out of my kid.

To quote again from Lessinger in a paper he prepared at the request of the Vice President of the United States in 1966:

> "The list of students and their educational needs is endless. They are all with us in the schools -- the eager, the trouble-makers, the silent and withdrawn, the ones who are adept at learning and the ones with serious learning problems. They should all complete a formal education -- capped with a diploma.

A school system which cares about its students does not permit a shoddy product in the form of an ill-prepared youth. No student should be permitted to receive a diploma who cannot display appropriate skill in the basic tools of learning, but no student is rejected for failure to meet appropriate standards.

He is worked with, placed in special learning situations and even provided an individual program within the district as a whole, until he can succeed.

Success teaching must become a most important teacher response to accountability.

I refer to the constant use of positive reinforcement of each student coupled with:

a) clear descriptions of the objectives to be reached by the student
b) an explanation or a sample of the evaluation to be made of the student's achievement.
c) as well as a list of materials and activities from which the student will choose those which will help him reach his objective.

In short, time may be varied, the place of learning may be varied, the approach, the staff and the materials may be varied but the aim should be single - the success of each student in mastering what he needs to master to become a productive citizen.

In response to accountability teachers will increase their use of the technologies

of education. The use of learning systems which have been validated must become more prevelant. There will be better "standard" practices in the classroom. There will be an increase in the rate of adoption of good practices, an up-grading of bad practices to good, and an outlawing of malpractices.

For the school administrators accountability will require strengthening of the board power, involvement of many publics in curricular and administrative policy making and hence an improved public understanding of education. Administrators must make increased use of proven management techniques such as what is referred to in business and industry as management by objectives and what we, in education, are attemtpting to adapt under the title of Planning-Programming-Budgeting-Evaluation System.

The System approach is a temendously powerful tool to be used by educators both in the area of instruction and management in response to the press for accountability. The System approach is goal oriented-product oriented - and is fundamentally characterized by:

1. A clear definition of the problem
2. A rational listing of all limitations and constraints
3. A listing of all logical alternative solutions.
4. The embarkation upon the most logical solution.
5. An almost immediate evaluation of the process and conjecture as to its ultimate success in reaching the goal.
6. An alteration of procedure if necessary.
7. A further evaluation of the new process
8. Evaluation and revamping of the procedures according to the information feedback until the goal is reached.

Theoretically, the System approach will allow goal attainment.

I applaud the management technique developed by the Research Council of the Association of School Business Officials and called by them Educational Resources Management Design. It is, fundamentally, a System approach to educational management.

PPBES is, in my opinion, the one refreshing suggestion in the area of school management being made today.

It could be the foundation for a truly accountable school system: the Christmas tree for the baubles of accountability.

Under the process referred to as Planning come broad goal setting, broad objective setting and the development of charters of accountability by school district advisory committees and boards of directors. Needs assessment and problem definition, as well as the broad design strategies of requests for proposals might also be duties of the planners.

Under the processes involved in programming come again the fleshing out of charters of accountability, the development of requests for proposals for more specific programs and performance contracting. The programming professionals would be responsible for objective setting in strict performance terminology and suggestions of payment of incentives from developmental capital.

Budgeting is, in terms of PPBES, basically a reconciliation of resources to outputs. The process of budgeting as carried on by the Budgeting Committee will also be one of reporting upon the allocation of resources and upon the reports of the internal educational assessments in terms of the resources allocated.

Evaluation or assessment will take into consideration various modes of proof to gain quality control. The Evaluation Committee will work closely with the

independent educational accomplishment auditor (IEAA) toward quality assurance.

If the activities of the various groups of educators and layment are to be effective in bringing about a System approach to school district management they must be continuous and they must make full use of sensors and the feedback .

This is not to say that we must wait for a complete PPBES system before utilizing some of the more effective "baubles." As you are well aware many school districts have already completed performance contracts. There is a great deal more community involvement in educational policy making than there was. Due to the pressure of the USOE most school districts have established program budgeting in one form or another. Many school administrators in central offices and in individual school buildings are utilizing techniques of success teaching, incentive pay and individualized instruction toward accountability.

Criteria of an Accountable School System

Let me spend a few moments at this time to discuss what I would think we would see if we looked at a school system that is accountable.

First of all we would notice a focus on learning - a recognition that teaching and learning are not the same - that individuals learn in different ways. The emphasis would be upon output, upon product, upon behavioral change in pupils and learning achievement.

There would be a recognition that student failure is, in fact, an instructional system failure. Students would not fail but programs might.

We would see serious attempts to individualize instruction. The grouping of students as the chief mode of instruction would be seen as an admission of lack of competency on the part of professionals.

We would notice teachers and administrators developing and using technology in terms of "what works" toward what ends.

We would see a distinguishing between good, poor, and malpractice. There would be noticeable and serious search for efficient educational processes in terms of dollars, pupil and teacher time, facilities, etc.

We would notice evidence that educational issues had been confronted. Such questions as:

What can the schools do?

What are educators responsible for and to whom?

What societal arrangements can be made to assist schools where they lack capabilities?

These and many other questions would have been dealt with.

PPBES and Performance objectives would be widely used. Performance Contracts may have been arranged and may be in operation.

Collective type bargaining between teachers and the board would be more balanced. That is to say that the board would, in fact, have something to bargain with. The board would require specific performance of teachers and administrators in exchange for requests made upon them.

What administrative competencies are required in order to build an accountable school system?

The professional administrator of the 70's and 80's must understand General System Theory and the System approach to educational problems and be able to apply these.

He or she must be able:

a) to develop acceptable performance objectives and to teach others to do the same.

b) to write acceptable units of programmed instruction and to teach others to write acceptable programs.

c) to link proper modes of proof to varieties of student learnings and to train others in the utilization of different modes of proof.

d) to prepare requests for proposals (RFP's) to meet priority needs and to successfully match performance contract bids with RFP's and to train others to do these.

e) to develop the critical elements of a PPBES model for his or her school or school system and implement the plan.

f) to develop a charter of accountability - based upon policy.

g) and to develop a quality control system on stipulated priorities.

In closing, Ladies and Gentlemen, may I say that accountability is a no-nonsense, business-like approach to education.

It has to do with honoring promises. It is the matching of intent to results; the comparison of what was supposed to happen with what actually happened. In education, accountability is the policy of demanding regular independent reports of promised student accomplishment for dollars provided. It is the hair-shirt policy--the response at budget-passing time to the request for more money with the question, "What did you do with that <u>other</u> money?" It is not just performance contracting, nor behavioral objectives, nor Planning-Programming-Budgeting System, though these inventions may be useful in implementing an accountability policy.

In the final analysis, Accountability is the final analysis--the hearing to get the facts, to determine worth, to check results. It brings to school instruction the same flavor of assessment and feedback to alter procedure brought by the fiscal auditor to school finance.

Some spokesmen within the organized education profession see the movement for accountability and the current mood toward financing education as a fad.

I believe they are wrong because education in the 1970's must fight at an appropriations table for tough competitive dollars desperately needed to solve a host of other problems. Even if a sudden surge of new money were to be made available, the situation would not change. Left with the status quo, we would not see better school performance. All we would get would be more expensive education.